



# CONNECT

*Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut*  
*Congregaciones Organizadas para un Nuevo Connecticut*

## TESTIMONY OF

Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut (CONNECT)

Before the Labor & Public Employees Committee, Regarding HB 6877

March 5, 2015

Thank you, Sen. Gomes and Rep. Tercyak for this opportunity to testify to the Labor & Public Employees Committee regarding House Bill 6877, An Act Concerning A Minimum Work Week For Persons Performing Janitorial Work. CONNECT is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organization made up of 27 congregations in New Haven & Fairfield Counties, representing 15,000 people.

Our members come together across race, ethnicity, faith, economic, partisan, and urban/suburban geographic lines to build relationships, develop leaders, and to act on issues of social justice and common concern. The relationships, conversations, and listening process are what drive the development of our issue agenda. Thus, we have worked on a variety of issue over the last several years, such as healthcare, immigrant issues, racial profiling, education, and gun violence.

Today, we wish to express our support HB 6877 because it tackles one of the root cause of a number of concerns that we have heard in our member congregations over the last several years, beginning during the economic crisis in 2008 and 2009. We have often heard stories about families going uninsured or making hard choices about making ends meet because of high healthcare costs and insurance premiums. We have often heard stories about families struggling to avoid foreclosure and work out restructured payments with their mortgage lender. We have often heard about the increasing number of working people that tap into our churches network of food pantries and soup kitchens and other relief efforts because their income, many times from part time jobs, was too low to cover the basics.

These stories have at their root the difficulty of many families to earn enough to support the basic needs of their families. According to a recent report by the United Way, roughly 35% of CT households struggle to make ends meet (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed Report, fall 2014). HB 6877 would allow more janitorial workers to get at least 30 hours per week, enabling them to earn enough to make ends meet, make them less likely to need public or private charitable assistance, and allow them a greater measure of dignity as employees. These market conditions have not been harmful in other areas of the country or other parts of the state. We hope that HB 6877 will help bring full time work to a much greater portion of the janitorial workforce in New Haven & Fairfield Counties. Thank you.